REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 9-12 are presently active in this case, Claims 1-8 and 13-30 have been canceled, and the specification amended by way of this preliminary amendment.

The present application is a divisional application under 37 C.F.R. §1.53(b) of parent Application Serial Number 09/639,239, filed on August 16, 2000, and includes non-elected claims 9-12 of the parent application. Full benefit of the filing date of the parent application is claimed pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §120. In addition, pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §119, the present application claims the benefit of foreign priority to Japanese Patent Applications No. 11-237467 filed August 24, 1999, No. 11-260799 filed September 14, 1999, No. 11-278608 filed September 30, 1999 and No. 11-206355 filed October 28, 1999, in the Japanese Patent Office.

Accordingly, an examination on the merits of Claims 9-12 is believed to be in order, and an early and favorable action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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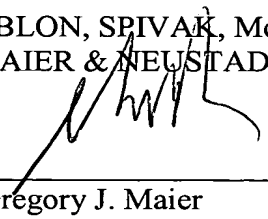

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